

# ENCOURAGEMENT TO CHARITY. A Sermon

Preached at the Charter-House Chapel  
*Dec. 12. 1678.* at an Anniversary  
Meeting in Commemoration of the  
Founder.

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By **WILLIAM DURHAM, D.D.**  
(*Sometimes Scholar of that Foundation*) and  
*Chaplain to His Grace the Duke of Monmouth.*

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## Heb. 13. 16.

*But to do good, and to communicate, forget not ; for with such Sacrifices God is well pleased.*

 His Epistle, whether wrote by S. Paul or S. Luke, was directed to the Hebrews ; that is, to the Jews that were converted to Christianity ; and principally to those of Judea and Jerusalem ; who notwithstanding their Conversion, by reason of their weakness and infirmity, were for a season indulged the practice and observance of the Rights and Ceremonies of the Jewish Church ; for which they retained so great an esteem and veneration, as if they still expected to be justified by them ; and so did not as they ought to do, press on to that Spirituality and Perfection revealed in the Gospel, of which those Legal Ceremonies were at the best but Types and Shadows.

And therefore the principal design and drift of the Author of this Epistle is to shew, That Christ is the Substance and Foundation of the Ceremonial Law, which of it self, without relation to him, was of no

value : but having fulfilled it in himself, the force and obligation of it was taken away ; and that those Sacrifices and external Purgations, which were onely Shadows of things to come, were now to give place to the true meritorious Sacrifice of Christ himself, which he had offered up as a full Propitiation for the sins of the whole world. And therefore presles all along upon these converted Jews, that leaving those low and beggarly Elements and Institutions, they would persevere in the Faith of Christ, and in the Practice of the Gospel, which is the true and reasonable service of *men*, much more acceptable to God than the bloud of Bulls or Goats, or the whole Pa-geantry of the Legal Sacrifices.

And this particularly is the Argument he pursues in this last Chapter, of which my Text is a part ; for in the tenth Verse he plainly says, *We (that is, we Christians) have an Altar, wherof they have no right to eat, that serve at the Tabernacle :* that is, that Christ the onely Christian Altar, to which we bring all our Christian Sacrifices, will not be beneficial to them that depend upon the Law of *Moses* ; which he further exemplifies in the 11, 12, and 13 Verses ; and then in the 15 Verse, the Verse immediately preceding my Text, tells them what sort of Sacrifice they should offer, not that of the Bodies of Beasts, but the true Christian Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving, which they were not onely once, but continually to offer up, in acknowledgment of the great power and goodness of God. *By him therefore let us offer up the Sacrifice of Praise continually, that is, the Fruit of our Lips, giving thanks to his Name,* Verse 15. And then in the words of my Text proceeds

ceeds to recommend another Christian Duty, which God will prefer before any Ceremony or Legal Sacrifice, which is Beneficence and Liberality. *To do good, and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

*Do good*, that is, to others that need your assistance; as far as you can, endeavour to be beneficial to them. *And communicate*, that is more particularly, let those that want partake of your plenty, for the relief of their necessities. *For with such sacrifices God is well pleased*, that is, this is a Duty which God particularly requires of you under the Gospel; the performance of which will be more acceptable to him, than any Sacrifices under the Law.

The subject of my ensuing Discourse from these words shall be to shew,

1. That acts of Beneficence and Charity are in a more peculiar way Duties of the Gospel.
2. Shew what further Encouragements there are for the performance of them, from the very nature of these Duties themselves in some particulars.
3. The Duty of those that are relieved by others Charity, in way of a more particular Application to this present occasion.

I shall begin with the first particular proposed.

1. That acts of Beneficence and Charity are in a more peculiar and eminent way Duties of the Gospel.

If we consider the History of the Life of our Blessed Saviour, and the Precepts he delivers to the world in his holy Gospel, we may find it to be one of the principal Designs of his Incarnation, to mollifie

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the rough and churlish Dispositions of men ; and instead thereof to restore the decayed Principles of Humanity and Goodness to their first perfection.

And therefore he made choice of that mean and humble form in which he appeared when he was here upon earth, as that wherein he was most likely, with the best advantage to recommend those Principles, by which he designed to reform the corrupted manners of the world. And so though it was in his power, yet he took not upon him the State and Majesty of a King, he affected not Power and Empire, the great Idols of this world, but took upon him the form of a Servant, that so in that Disguise conversing familiarly with the meanest of the people, he might the better put in practice those Doctrines of Goodness and Charity he was to deliver to the world, and by his example also teach Mankind this Lesson, That men are born not for themselves, but for the benefit of others ; and that it is much more desirable to be good than to be great.

And though the Jews were generally blinded with a false notion they had entertained, of a glorious and triumphant *Messiah*, who they fancied was to go out before them to Battel, (like *Moses* or *Joshua*) and subdue and conquer all their Enemies, Yet we find our Saviour himself laid down a quite different Character of the true *Messiah*, in the 11th. Chapter of *Matthew*, Verse 5. where after *John the Baptist* in Verse 3. had sent two of his Disciples to him to know, *Whether he were the same that should come, or whether they should expect another;* that is, whether

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ther he were the Christ or no ; he returns him only this Answer in that 5th. Verse, Tell him (said he) *wat ye hear and see, that the blind receive their sight, that the lame walk, that the lepers are cleansed, that the deaf hear, that the dead are raised, and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them.* Thereby giving the true marks by which Christ the *Messiah* was to be known, viz. not by his Power and outward Greatness, but by the offices of Goodness and Kindness he was to do in the world, particularly to the Poor, to whom he was in an especial manner to preach the glad tidings of the Gospel.

*The Son of man came not to be ministered unto,* (as he says himself, Matth.20.28.) *but to minister,* and to condescend to the meanest offices of Humanity and Kindness to the poor and the abject, which he performed with great compassion throughout the whole course of his Life.

This was his constant practice, as we find in the History of the Gospel, to which his Doctrine was exactly suitable. His Sermons and Discourses to the people were all to the same purpose : he did not entertain his Disciples with nice and high-flown Speculations, (according to the vain way of the Gentile Philosophers) which should only amuse their minds with unprofitable and impracticable Notions, that tended to no real and substantial good : But his Doctrines were purely for the use and real benefit of mankind, for the establishment of Peace, and Love, and Kindness in the world ; and for the restraining and curbing those immoderate Passions, which made men mischievous, or at best very uneasy to one another. His Law was the perfect Law of Love and

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Charity, according to the utmost extent in the greatest Comprehension that ever yet it was proposed to the world.

He commands us not onely to love our Neighbours and Friends, with whom we peaceably and amicably live in the same civil Society, but also that *we love our enemies, and those that hate us.* He commands us not onely not to revenge an injury (which was the highest strain any Philosophers ever reach'd to in their Principles, few so high in their Practice) but instead of evil to return good, *to bless those that curse us, and to shew kindness to those that despitefully use us.* He commands us to bestow our Charity, not at large to any persons we may have a fancy and inclination to, but he particularly determines it to our very Enemies; *If thine enemy hunger give him bread, if he thirst give him drink.*

These are the Principles of Humanity and Goodness, he has recommended to the practice of the world, refined and sublimated to the highest degree of Perfection, that Humane Nature is capable of. And thus we see how this Divine Law of Love and Charity is pressed upon all Christians, both by the example and particular commands of our Saviour; so that the observance of it is not left to our liberty for a Free-will Offering, whereby we may supererogate; but it is *essential* to true Christianity, without which we can in no wise pretend to be the Disciples of Christ.

We are not therefore to think (to apply this Discourse more particularly to Charity, which I mainly design) with the selfish and churlish Worldlings, that whatsoever we can scrape together, (provided it be

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by means allowable by the Law) is presently all our own; and that when once we have got it into our clutches, we may dispose of it as we please. No man in this World is a Free-holder, and an absolute Proprietor, in respect of the Worldly Estate, which he possesses, but he has it from God, under some certain terms and limitations, who has made some Reserves, and allotted some Pensions that are to be paid out to the *Poor* and the *Distressed*.

The Rich are only Gods Stewards and Almoners, with whom he intrusts the Relief of their *Necessitous Brethren*. Now, if they spend the Portion of the *Poor* in Riot and Superfluity, or any other way divert it from the use it was designed, they are false to the Trust Almighty God has reposed in them; they oppress and defraud the *Poor*, and are upon the matter as Criminal as those that pick their Pockets, and rifle their Houses, for which their Great Lord will one day call them to a severe account.

And indeed, if the Gospel were silent, the common Principles of Natural Reason and Equity would in great measure enforce this Duty. For can we suppose, that God, the Wise Creator and Governour of all things, who regardeth not the *high looks of the Proud, and is no Respecter of Persons*, should be so favourable and partial to the Rich, and to the Great, as to bestow upon them such Plenty and Superfluity, without some Reservation, for the necessary Support, at least, of those who have the same Common Principles of Nature, and are equally the Workmanship of his own Hands.

Or, if Societies of men were joyned together merely by compact, can we reasonably think that

the meaner and lower sort of People should ever willingly consent, or quietly submit to so unequal, nay, so unjust an Establishment, as that which raiseth some to so vast a height and greatness, whilst they themselves are destitute of the necessary supports of Life, without remedy? Is it reasonable that the Head, and some other of the more Honourable Parts of the Body, should be filled with precious Ointments and Perfumes, decked and adorned in the most costly and extravagant manner, while no care or regard should be had to the Feet and other viler Parts, which do the common drudgery of the Body, and are the chief support of the whole? No, there ought certainly to be a proportionable care for *all* the Members, because they partake of the same Nature, and perform their distinct functions in the common offices of Life.

And so ought it also to be in Societies of men, the Rich, and the Powerful, and the Honourable, who are maintained and supported in their Greatness by the Services of *Meane Persons*, are obliged in way of just Recompence to take *such* under their care and protection, and out of their Superfluities, as often as occasion requires, make the low and mean Estate, to which the others quietly submit, for the sake of Order and Peace, to be as supportable and comfortable as is possible.

Now, if it be demanded in what way, or after what proportion this *Charitable Relief* is to be distributed to Persons in *Want* and *Distress*; I answer, it is to be done without any bounds or limitation, both for the Manner and the Measure, but such as *Christian Prudence* shall direct and determine. We ought,

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ought, out of our greater *Experience and Knowledge*, to counsel and advise the *Ignorant*, with our *Power* to defend and protect the *Innocent* from Oppression, and with our *Riches* and *Abundance* to relieve the *Wants* and *Necessities* of the *Poor* and *Indigent*, without any determinate stint ; but according to our *Abilities*, and according to what the *Exigence* of others may require. And in this Latitude and Extent are these Acts of *Beneficence* and *Charity*, in a more peculiar way, Duties of Gospel : which was the first Particular.

But, besides this obligation of Duty, I shall, as I proposed, shew,

Secondly, The farther Encouragements we have to the Performance of these Acts of *Beneficence* and *Charity*, from their own nature : in that,

First, They are *agreeable* to the Principles of *Humanity*, and highly *grateful* to a Generous temper in the very Performance.

Secondly, They give us great satisfaction of Mind at the time of our Death.

Thirdly, They make us live in the World after Death, by perpetuating our Names and Memories.

Fourthly, They lay a good and sure foundation for Everlasting Life in the World that is to come.

First, These Acts of *Kindness* and *Charity* are agreeable to the Principles of Nature, and highly grateful to a Generous Temper in the Performance.

However, Atheistical Persons, to make way for their false and impious Principles, think fit to scandalize *Human Nature*, representing Men as Wolves

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and Tygres, and Beasts of Prey, prone to tear and devour one another, and at liberty to do it by their *Natural Principles*; yet this is an impudent and malicious Slander of their own and the Devils devising, whereby God is dishonoured and Mankind abused.

The Law of *Love*, and *Charity*, and *Compassion*, is the first and most Ancient Law, and has a direct foundation in *Nature* it self, being interwoven in the very frame and contexture of our Bodies; We are not hewn out of a Rock that is obdurate and insensible, but are made up of the softer and more relenting Principles of Flesh and Blood, which would incline us to be kind, merciful, and compassionate, were it not that *Pride*, *Ambition*, *lust*, and *Worldly-mindedness* (Creatures of the Devil) did by degrees corrupt and vitiate the true Principles and Inclinations of *Nature*, and choak those seeds of Humanity (which though oppressed) lye deeply rooted in *every mans heart*.

But to a *good* and *generous Temper* nothing is so grateful and voluptuous as to do *Good*, and discharge its Pity in some kind and charitable Office. *Nature* it self is powerful within, who with great Zeal intercedes in the behalf of the *Poor* and *Afflicted*, and to be sure, pleads heartily upon that Argument, because she then pleads for *Self*, that she may thereby allay the Pain of her Compassion, and ease the distress of her own Bowels.

And surely any ingenious Person, that has been exercised in the Practice of this delightful Duty of *Charity*, will not esteem his Obligation to it to be any burden or heavy Imposition; but will clearly and

and joyfully take the advantage of every Opportunity of performing it, for the very Pleasure and Satisfaction of mind that attends it.

Now though this is an Entertainment with which few *Worldlings* and *ill natur'd men* are acquainted, yet to *well affected Minds* it is most pleasant, and the parting with Riches in such a way is much more delightful than either the getting or spending of them upon themselves.

The Pleasure of thus doing *Good* is far greater than that of receiving it. To relieve a Poor afflicted man in his Distress, and to rescue him from the Evils with which he was oppressed, is a God-like act, resembling that of the Creation, a Prerogative Royal of the Almighty communicated to poor mortal Creatures, whereby they *become* (what our first Parents vainly affected by their Disobedience) *even as Gods*.

For he that is thus enabled to raise a poor forlorn Creature, that is destitute of Help, and give him Comfort (a new and an unknown thing to him) does, as it were, create such a man, and bring him out of Nothing, and he that relieves one fallen from a prosperous State into Misery and Distress, raises him in a manner from the Dead, and endues him with a second Life.

Now what greater Dignity and Honour than this can Humane Nature be capable of? or what should more reasonably satisfie the utmost Ambition of men, than to be thus put in the Place of God himself, to be clothed with the Robes of his Royalty, and have the Signature of that Power, which is Divine, imprinted upon them? And thus we see how the Practice

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ctice of this Duty of *Charity*, is both Delightful and Honourable, and every way agreeable to the Inclinations of a great and generous Mind: which was the first Encouragement proposed, from the Nature of the Duty it self.

Secondly, as the Performance of these Duties of *Kindness* and *Charity* is highly agreeable and grateful to our Natures, so will the Reflection upon it give us great Consolation at the hour of Death.

And certainly there is nothing a man ought more to labour after, than that he may so frame his Life, that he may with Quiet and Confidence leave this World when God shall call him hence; and if he cannot attain to this, he can never esteem himself happy in any Condition whatsoever, because those sad apprehensions he will have at that last and dreadful hour, if he be not thus prepared, will deface and utterly blot out the Remembrance of all the Joyes and the Pleasures of his former Life.

Now there is nothing does so cheer and revive a mans Spirit at his Death, (except the interest he apprehends in the merits of Christ) as the Reflection upon the *Good* he has done in the World in his Life time; then will his Alms and Oblations, and all the Offices of Kindness he has done, present themselves before him to his unspeakable comfort, and support his fainting and drooping Spirit, in that time of *Nature*s great Distress. When the Remembrance of all worldly Felicity and Greatness will bring nothing along with it, but Torment and Vexation of Spirit. The Epicure will find *then* but little Comfort when he shall consider with himself, how he has spent the Portion of the *Poor* in Riot and Luxury, and pam-

pampered his Lusts with that which should have refreshed their hungry Bowels.

The most Magnificent and Stately Monarch will not then be at all affected with the Pomp and Greatness of his former Life, nor be pleased with the Remembrance of those great and bloody Exploits, whereby he has made himself terrible to the Neighbouring Nations. Though he has conquered and subdued Kingdomes, and set up the Trophies of his Victories in every Place, yet what Comfort will all this give him, when he is at the point to die? Will the Plains strowed with the dead Bodies of his vanquished Enemies be a Scene of Delight to his disturbed and disordered Fancy? or the Lamentation of Widows and Orphans, which his Sword has made, be musick in his Eares, and drive away the Melancholy from his Heart, at that uncomfortable hour? No, the Memory of his former Oppressions and Cruelties will *then* torment him, the frightful Ghosts of those thousands, which for his Lust, or his Ambition, or his Avarice, he has murder'd and destroy'd, will stare him in the Face, and make dreadful Impressions upon his guilty and troubled Mind; and so he must needs leave the World in great Horroure and Confusion. But the good Deeds of the just Comfort and refresh his Spirit, when he lies upon his bed of languishing, and so he surrenders up his Soul with Confidence into the hands of God the Just and Righteous Judge. It pleases him then to think, that he has not been hurtful, nor altogether unprofitable to the World, having done something for the good of it before he left it; especially if he have contributed the settlement of his Charity to succeeding ages  
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he may then be content and well pleased to put off mortality, and live in those Works of Piety he leaves behind; for the Design and End of his Life, having been only to do Good, he will easily be disposed to die willingly, when he knows he shall continue his doing of Good after his Death; he will without any Trouble part with Life, because he is to enjoy the true benefits of it, when he is dead, living more desirable this way, than in a natural Off-spring, whereby most men fondly imagine they perpetuate themselves.

For the Affinity of Blood will soon be worn out, and what Concern and Interest has a man in a distant Posterity? besides, he knows not how soon it may degenerate and prove unworthy to inherit his labours; and this very Consideration cast a damp upon Solomon the wisest of men, in the midst of his Greatness, 2 Eccles. 18. 19. *I hated, said he, all the Labour I had taken under the Sun, because I must leave it to the man that shall be after me, and who knoweth whither he shall be a Wise man or a Fool? yet shall he have Rule over all my Labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shew'd my self Wise under the Sun.*

But a man that does what good he can in his Life time, and then leaves the remainder of his Substance for an Inheritance to the Poor when he dies, satisfies himself, that what he leaves behind is disposed of to Pious uses, according to his hearts desire, and by this means he makes the most of this World, that is possible, enjoying it as much and as far as is consistent with this State of Mortality, and perpetuates his Memory to the best Advantage to succeeding Genera-

Generations ; which leads me to the third Encouragement proposed.

Thirdly, *Acts of Beneficence* and *Charity* do after the best and most honourable way perpetuate our Names and Memories to Posterity.

*A good Name* (says *Solomon*) is *as precious Oynment* ; and there is nothing which the more Ingenious part of mankind more earnestly affect, than a good Reputation, and to leave a fair remembrance of themselves and their Actions, to the Ages that are to come : but the greater part of men being blinded with Ambition and Vain-glory, court a false Reputation, and *prefer* rather to leave a *great*, than a *good* Name behind them.

In vain do great Princes think to perpetuate their Memories, by magnificent and stately Buildings of Stone or Marble, for Posterity to gaze on, which add nothing to *their* true Honour, but are rather Records and Monuments of their Pride and Vanity.

In vain do the great Troublers of the world endeavour to be magnified in Story for their mighty *Conquests*, (a Gentile word in use amongst the *great*, whereby Murder and Robbery are exprested in a more civil and courtly manner;) for instead of that Glory and Renown they think to get, they bring (in the opinion of all good and virtuous men) a scandal and an everlasting infamy upon themselves.

For what are the great things they would have recorded of them to posterity ? that they have brought great Ruines and Desolations upon Mankind, depopulated *great* Kingdoms and Countries, and committed Crimes and Barbarities *too great* for Justice to take notice of. These are the worthy Atchievements they

desire to have related, which are so far from doing them any Honour, that they are an eternal reproach to their Memories.

But the Actions of the just and good man, who endeavours in his life-time to be beneficial to Mankind, are as a *sweet-smelling savour*, his beneficence and *charity* perfume his memory to all Generations; he is remembred by the tokens of Goodness he has left behind him.

All good men will do him honour, as a great Benefactor to the World, rehearsing with praise and admiration the noble and generous Acts he did in his life-time; how kind, how good, how courteous, how bountiful he was; how he relieved the *poor*, protected the *innocent*, comforted the *afflicted*, and according to the utmost of his power advanced the happiness and prosperity of *mankind*.

Now such a Memorial as this is worthy to be recorded to posterity, (much to be preferred before a long and vain Inscription in Marble or Brass, relating a pompous story of bloody Slaughters that have been committed.) This is the good *Name* that is the true and proper Portion and Inheritance of the Just, whereby he lives in the minds of the *good* and the *virtuous*, with whom his Memory is precious, and his Name honourable; which was the third Encouragement to this sort of good works.

Fourthly and lastly, these works of *Charity* lay a good and firm foundation for eternal life in the world to come, as the Apostle particularly declares in 1 Tim. 6. v. 17, 18, 19. *Charge them (says he) that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us all*

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all things richly to enjoy, that they do good, and that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. Where S. Paul gives counsel and direction, how the rich should lay out their wealth to the best advantage and improvement, viz. that they should give it to the poor, and that thereby they would make the best sort of purchase, even a purchase of eternal life, and secure a Treasure in Heaven, where moths do not corrupt, and where thieves do not break thorough and steal ; an Inheritance that is everlasting, that fadeth not away, that is eternal in the Heavens. So that we see the onely way to preserve our Riches is thus, to part with them ; for what we keep we are forced to leave behind, but what we give away we carry along with us.

When Princes die, they cannot carry away their wealth, neither does any of their Pomp and their Glory follow them ; Naked came they into this world, and naked must they return ; they brought nothing with them, and 'tis certain they can carry nothing out.

But the good deeds of the just and compassionate man follow him into the other world ; nay, rather they go before to prepare a place for him ; and therefore our Saviour himself in Luke 16.9. gives us this advice, that in our life-time whilst we have opportunity, we should make us friends of our unrighteous mammon, (so he calls the riches of this World) that so when we fail they may receive us into everlasting habitations.

By which we see, that the poor which we relieve if they belong to the household of faith, are so many

Harbingers sent before, to open the Gates of Heaven, and to prepare a Place for us. They will then bear Testimonie of our Deeds of *Charity* towards *them* in their Distress, before God and his Holy Angels; upon which Deposition of *Theirs* our Saviour, the Just and Righteous Judge, will pronounce that comfortable Sentence, in the 15 Mat. v. 35. *Come ye blessed of my Father, and inherit the Kingdom prepared for you before the Foundation of the World, for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a Stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in Prison, and ye came unto me. For verily I say unto you, in as much as you have done it to these, you have done it unto me; enter therefore into the Joy of your Master.*

And thus have I dispatched also the second general Head proposed, the Encouragements that are for the Performance of this Duty of *Charity* from its Nature and Effects, thorough the whole Course and Progress of it. The Practice of it is pleasant to us whilst we live; the Remembrance of it comfortable when we die; the History of it is honourable to our Memories after Death; and besides all this, it layes a firm Foundation for everlasting Life in the World that is to come.

It now only remains that I proceed to the third and last thing proposed, briefly to shew what are the Duties of those that are or have been relieved by others *Charity*, as a more particular Application to this Assembly. I shall instance in these two following Particulars.

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1. *There is required Commemoration of the Kindness thus received.*

2. *An hearty Endeavour to answer the Designs and Intentions of it.*

1. There is required a grateful Commemoration of the *Kindness* and the *Charity* thus received.

And this is a return which Nature it self and the common Principles of Gratitude dictate to all men: He that can receive a Kindness, and not be at all sensible of it, is a Monster of Barbarity, unfit to converse with Mankind, and unworthy to receive any Offices of Humanity. And therefore the least and lowest Degree of Acknowledgment we can make is to be heartily affected with it, and upon all Occasions endeavour to preserve and revive the memory of our Benefactors, and that charitable Assistance we have received from them.

And certainly in a more special manner all that any way relate to this noble and ample Foundation, have abundant Reason to magnify the Goodness of God, for that plentiful Provision he has made for them by the pious Charity of our munificent Founder, whose Memory we this Day celebrate, upon which occasion our hearts ought to be enlarged with a grateful Sense of those great Mercies God has conveyed to us by his means.

You that are of the younger sort are to consider with your selves, how great Obligations you have to a Pious Gratitude upon the account of those great Blessings you receive in this Place; here are you nourished and bred up with that care, as if you were in your own *Fathers* Houses; with that Indulgence to your tender Age, as if you were still under the wings

wings of your *Mothers*: Here are many of you rescued from the sad and grievous preslures of Poverty, and the dreadful effects of it; and delivered from the Calamities of a low and a base *Fortune*, and the Temptations to which it usually exposes men to. All things are here provided for your comfortable Subsistence, without any Care or Pains of your own; you are fed as the *Young Ravens*, to which our Saviour alludes, *Luke 12. v. 24.* you only open your Mouths, call upon God, and are filled with good Things. You neither spin nor toil, but are clothed as the *Lillies of the Field*, and what is far more valuable than all this, you have means afforded you of an ingenious and virtuous Education.

Your tender natures are seasoned with early Principles of Piety and good Literature, whereby (if you are not wanting to your selves) you may be fitted for future Imployment, in your several wayes, to the Honour of God, the Credit of the *Founder*, the Comfort of your Parents, the good of the Church, and the Service of your King and Country. All which great and signal Mercies cry aloud to you for a grateful Acknowledgment.

And you that are old and Gray-headed, are under no less Obligations.

Consider with your selves how happily you may pass your declining age in this Place, if you duly improve those Opportunities you do enjoy. You have here a safe and quiet Retreat, from the Cares and Troubles of Life, being free from the noise and Buzzle of the World, and at perfect leisure to compose your minds and fit your selves for your approaching end. *Death* many times comes upon

*other*

other men at unawares, whilst they are in the hurry of business, and engaged in a hot and eager pursuit after Worldly projects, which makes him more dreadful when he appears ; but certainly, those in your state of Life can never be surprized by Death, because you have nothing else to do, but to expect him ; and by staring him continually in the face, his visage must needs become less terrible unto you. In the mean while, you have nothing to distract your minds or distract your thoughts, but are at liberty wholly to apply your selves to the Service of God, to make your peace with him, and patiently expect and wait till your great change come.

You are passed over the troublesome and tempestuous Sea of this World, and are arrived at an harbour of Rest, where all things are calm and quiet, from whence you may look out and see the World round about you in Confusion and Distraction, and every one ( as in a great storm ) tumbling and tossing up and down, not knowing where to find any Secure and Resting Place ; whilst *You* enjoy Peace, and Ease, and Retirement ; a state of Life which the greatest Monarchs have envied, and have resigned their Crowns and Empires, and ~~left~~ themselves of all their Worldly glory, that they might only secure to themselves before their death, some few such happy and quiet hours as you enjoy : and therefore ought *you* also be seriously and thankfully affected for all those Advantages you receive from the hand of God, let your hearts be filled with Thanksgiving, and your mouths with his Praise ; Yea, let all both *Young* and *Old* joyn together in  
consort

confort, singing *Hallelujah*, and Anthems of Praise to the Name of the most High, whose Goodness is infinite, and whose Mercies are over all his Works. But,

Secondly, A bare Acknowledgment is not sufficient ; there is a farther duty required of those that live upon *Charity*, which is, that they answer the designs and intentions of their Benefactors, by living according to the Rules prescribed them, and by making Improvements answerable to the Encouragements *they* do receive.

And therefore (to apply this more particularly) the *younger sort* here ought with all possible diligence and industry, to endeavour to improve themselves in Learning, and Piety, and Good manners ; for which purpose so Liberal a Maintenance is allowed.

And the *Aged* ought to sequester themselves from the World, at least from the Cares, the Lusts, and the Vanities of it, and attend carefully and constantly upon the Service of God and all holy Duties, that so living soberly, godlily, and circumspectly, they may be in a continual readiness and preparation to expect the summons of Death, which they are daily to look for.

And all others of us, who have at any time partook of the same Bounty, ought to esteem our selves as great Debtors to the Publick for what we have this way received; we are not to think we are at our own disposal, but that we are bought with a Price and purchased, to be a People zealous and studious of good works. Which if we neglect, we are highly ungrateful and unjust to our *Founder*; none of

his Children, but Usurpers upon others rights, ~~and~~ who have robbed the Heirs of his Family of their Inheritance.

Let us therefore all of us labour by all means possible to discharge our selves of this Obligation, by being some way more than ordinary serviceable to God and the Publick, that so we may give encouragement to persons piously disposed, by the good effects of other mens Charity, to the like practise of it themselves.

This is our Duty in general, more particularly we that have been bred up upon the same common stock of Charity ought, *first*, to preserve love and union amongst our selves ; *secondly*, we ought to be humble ; *thirdly*, we ought to be charitable to others.

1. We are more particularly obliged to preserve love and union amongst our selves.

For our pious and charitable *Founder* having passed by his own Family, and adopted us for his Children, we thereby become Brethren, as being the joyn't Heirs of our common Father ; and therefore we ought to retain the Memory of this Relation : and however we may be disposed of, and dispersed about in the World, we ought to carry the Sense of it about with us where ever we are, as a Character and Impression that is indeleble, the effects of which we ought to manifest upon all occasions, as opportunity offers it self, by all expressions of kindness and good will one to another.

Secondly, The remembrance of that charitable Relief we have received ought to keep us humble.

—Be ye clothed with humility, saith S. Peter, 1 Pet. 5. v. 5. Where he recommends Humility to all Christians, not as a loose thing, which they may take up, and lay aside again at pleasure, but as their *clothing*, which is always to be upon them, as a necessary Covering to their Nakedness. Now if every Christian ought to be *clad with humility as a garment*, we must wear it *as a Livery*, as a signal and peculiar Badge, whereby we are to be distinguished from all others, and known to belong to the Household of Charity.

Men that have been born to great Honours and Titles, and have had all along a continued and uninterrupted stream of Prosperity flowing in upon them, without being beholding to others for it, are perhaps under a temptation sometimes, (though it ill become *them*) to despise others, and overvalue themselves: but when men of low and mean beginnings, who have been lifted up by degrees to a higher station, by the charitable assistances of others, shall forget themselves and their Benefactors, and with the rest of the vain world be puffed up with high and arrogant conceits of themselves, they expose themselves to the scorn and derision of Mankind: For as Pride is not seemly in any, so in them is it contemptible and ridiculous. They ought to look down into the Pit from whence they were taken, and remember that their Foundation was in the dust, the reflection upon which ought to keep them low in their own eyes, and check their lofty Imaginations and teach them the more proper Lessons of Modesty and Humility; which was the second particular.

Thirdly, And lastly (to bring this discourse back again

again to the immediate Subject of the Text) Having been relieved by *Charity* our selves, we are therby more particularly obliged to be charitable to others, as God shall enable us.

For as *Charity* is a Duty in all, so in us it is a debt, and what we have received in our need from others, we are to refund in some measure to those that are in the like Condition.

How can we turn away our Faces from the *Poor*, and shut up the Bowels of our Compassion against them, when we consider what plentiful Almes we have received our selves, without which, perhaps, many might have been in as low and forlorn a Condition as these that implore their Pity. Such a reflection upon our selves, and our former Condition, ought to encline us to Commiserate the Distresses of others; and this is an argument God urges upon the *Israelites*, in a case not unlike this, *Levit. 19.34*. Remember, (says he) to be kind to the Stranger that dwells among you, and love and cherish him as your own People, for ye were also Strangers in the Land of *Ægypt*.

To conclude, therefore considering what we have received; we ought to abound in every good Work, especially those of *Kindness* and *Charity*, which are expected at our Hands as an offering of Thankfulness, for the Mercies we have by the same means enjoyed. And so let us take the Advice of my Text and the Words immediately preceding to our selves. Verse, 15. 16. Let us offer up the Sacrifice of Praise to God continually, the fruit of our Lips giving Thanks to his Name; And to do Good and communicate, let us not forget, for with such Sacrifices God is well pleased.